

MEDICAL CODERS, also called health information coders, begin by gathering patient health information from medical records. Medical Coders consult classification manuals and rely on their own knowledge of disease processes to assign a special code to each diagnosis and procedure. The codes are entered into computers. Correct coding is very important because this information is used to bill private health insurance providers and Medicare.

Medical Coders also use computer programs to gather and analyze data to help improve patient care, control costs, or for use in research studies. Most coders are employed by hospitals, doctor's offices, nursing homes, and insurance companies.

### Requirements

- ▲ High school diploma or equivalent.
- ▲ Completion of a course in medial records coding is usually required.
- ▲ Possess knowledge of medical coding systems, medical terminology, diseases, and medications.
- ▲ Some hospitals require experience in medical coding as well as graduation from a course in medical records.
- ▲ Some employers prefer to hire certified Medical Coders.

### Wages

- ▲ Medical Coders annual salary wage:
 

Entry level salary range	\$36–\$49,000
Experienced level salary range	\$49–\$66,000

Source: *Allied for Health*, 2005

## Medical Coders

### Job Outlook

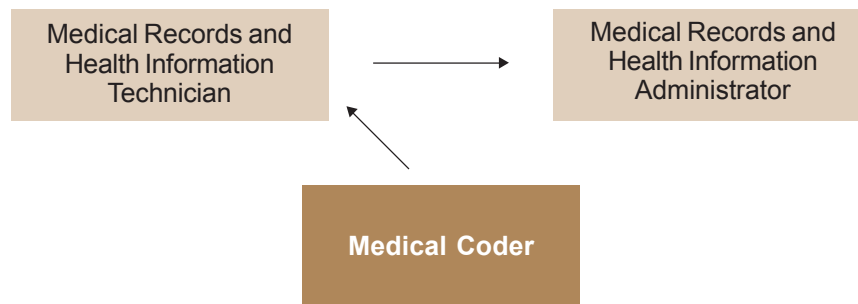
- ▲ Estimated number of Medical Coders in 2004: 13,900
- ▲ Estimated number of Medical Coders in 2014: 17,500
- ▲ Estimated annual job openings: 560

*Source: Occupational Projections, EDD/LMID. These figures represent the broad occupational group Medical Records and Health Information Technicians that includes Medical Coders.*

### Sources of Information

- ▲ American Health Information Management Association  
(312) 233-1100  
[www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org)
- ▲ California Health Information Association  
(559) 251-5038  
[www.californiahia.org](http://www.californiahia.org)
- ▲ *California Occupational Guide*, No. 134  
Medical Record/Health Information Technicians and Administrators

### Possible Career Paths



*The skills, knowledge, and abilities acquired for the primary occupation provide a solid foundation for further growth in health career occupations. Additional education or training is often required.*